

PHYSICAL THERAPY MANAGEMENT OF ICE HOCKEY ATHLETES: FROM THE RINK TO THE CLINIC AND BACK

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ABSTRACT

Background: The increasing number of athletes playing hockey compels rehabilitation professionals working in orthopedic and sports settings to understand the unique functional demands of ice hockey and the patterns of injuries they may promote.

Purpose: The purpose of this clinical perspective is to: (1) discuss the functional implications of different positions and age levels on injury prevalence within the sport; (2) summarize the seven most common injuries sustained by ice hockey athletes; and (3) present a conceptual model for the clinical management and prevention of these injuries by rehabilitation professionals.

Methods: A narrative review and synthesis was conducted of currently available literature on prevalence, etiology, rehabilitative intervention, prognosis, and prevention of ice hockey injuries.

Results: Research evidence is available to support the prevalence of injuries sustained while participating in ice hockey, as well as the most effective clinical treatment protocols to treat them. Most of the existing protocols are based on clinical and sports experience with incorporation of scientific data.

Conclusion: This clinical commentary reviews the current concepts of ice hockey injury care and prevention, based on scientific information regarding the incidence, mechanism, rehabilitation protocols, prognosis, and prevention of injuries. Science-based, patient-centered reasoning is integral to provide the highest quality of rehabilitative and preventative care for ice hockey athletes by physical therapists.

Key Words: Closed-head injuries, femoro-acetabular impingement, high ankle sprain injuries, ice hockey injuries, MCL injuries, shoulder injuries.

Level of Evidence: 5

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